

# Exhibit 4



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# Transcript of Dakota L. Wood

**Date:** August 13, 2024

**Case:** Students For Fair Admissions -v- The United States Naval Academy, et al.

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Conducted on August 13, 2024

<p>1 game, but that question is so open ended, I  2 think it calls for -- it calls for  3 communication that is privileged or protected  4 under section F of the protective order that  5 governs.</p> <p>6 BY MR. CARMICHAEL:</p> <p>7 Q. When -- do you know when  8 plaintiff's counsel contacted you?</p> <p>9 <b>A. I'm going to guess it was early</b>  <b>10 June, but I'd have to look at my own records.</b></p> <p>11 Q. When were you retained as an  12 expert here?</p> <p>13 <b>A. Right about the same time.</b></p> <p>14 Q. How did you go about preparing  15 your report?</p> <p>16 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: And, again, I  17 will object to the extent that this calls for  18 information that's not the proper subject of  19 discovery under section F of the protective  20 order. So I'm -- I'm not sure that he can  21 answer that question. If you can maybe make  22 it narrower, you might be okay.</p>	93	<p>1 then my relationship with national security,  2 national defense and military affairs issues  3 since then, right? So 40 some odd years to  4 share my exposure, my insights, where my  5 experience, you know, led me in terms of being  6 able to comment on this aspect of racial,  7 ethnic, gender, religion, socioeconomic, you  8 know, whatever those criteria are and whether  9 they had any bearing on military  10 effectiveness. So in terms of my methodology,  11 it was a review of my own career and then  12 sharing insights derived from that career.</p> <p>13 Q. You didn't -- you didn't review  14 the Naval Academy omission's process as part  15 of this, did you?</p> <p>16 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: Object to the  17 form of the question.</p> <p>18 THE WITNESS: I did not  19 independently research the Naval Academy's  20 procedures and processes, but I certainly have  21 provided materials, you know, from the  22 defendant side in which they talk about what</p>	95
<p>1 Q. Your methodology, how did you --  2 how did you -- how'd you start formulating  3 this report?</p> <p>4 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: So I -- I will  5 instruct the witness that you can answer that  6 question only to the extent that it doesn't  7 require you to reveal information about drafts  8 of your report, communications that you had  9 with counsel, or any other information that  10 does not appear in your final report.</p> <p>11 THE WITNESS: As I stated in my  12 own report, I was asked to address two  13 questions, and I'd have to refer back to the  14 page that, you know, the specifics of that,  15 but generally speaking, it was, did I think  16 race or gender or any kind of attribute was  17 relevant to the combat effectiveness of  18 military forces? And so I reviewed my own  19 career, you know, from when I had firsthand  20 knowledge of the military. That would've been  21 the Naval Academy. Those 20 years following  22 the Naval Academy, so that'd be 24 years, and</p>	94	<p>1 the academy does in its admissions process.</p> <p>2 BY MR. CARMICHAEL:</p> <p>3 Q. Are you offering an opinion on  4 the Naval Academy submission's process?</p> <p>5 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: Object to the  6 form of the question.</p> <p>7 THE WITNESS: I'm offering an  8 opinion on whether racial, ethnic, gender, any  9 other types of diversity forces has any  10 relation or bearing on the military  11 effectiveness of U.S. military forces.</p> <p>12 Q. But not to the Naval Academy  13 admissions process specifically?</p> <p>14 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: Object to the  15 form.</p> <p>16 THE WITNESS: My opinion on the  17 admissions process is, if there is a standard,  18 right, to be met and an applicant meets those  19 standards, then they should be admitted to the  20 Naval Academy. If standards are being  21 adjusted or an admission's decision is being  22 weighted to favor any other objective, knowing</p>	96

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<p>1 defined by the academy, who is to say, that  2 they will be properly or appropriately  3 assigned to billets on ships or shore  4 installations or specific units that would be  5 engaging in this complex global affairs  6 effort? So does the Naval Academy maintain  7 that the US Navy and its officer assignment  8 policies would somehow ensure that racial  9 minorities are always kept in certain billets  10 in a globally deployed force such that the US  11 Navy has a racial diversity to be more  12 effective in these global affairs.</p> <p>13 Q. So let's assume that all of  14 the -- for the purpose of this question, that  15 all students admitted to the Naval Academy are  16 qualified, essentially there's -- the Naval  17 Academy is just choosing between qualified  18 candidates, so nobody's getting in that's  19 unqualified. Would that change your opinion  20 that a race conscious missions program would  21 provide a benefit to the -- to the officer  22 core?</p>	249	<p>1 Q. Okay. We can put this document  2 aside. Oh, excuse me. I'm sorry. Before we  3 do that.</p> <p>4 A. Sure.</p> <p>5 Q. So you in making -- in these  6 several -- obviously you've disagreed with  7 several statements here made in this brief.  8 So you disagree with the statements of these  9 individual signers of this brief; is that  10 right?</p> <p>11 A. I don't know which individual  12 wrote what part of this brief. I presume that  13 this -- this paper has been presented to imply  14 that all of the signers of this brief agree  15 with everything that is stated in there, but I  16 don't know that to be a fact.</p> <p>17 Q. If that were the case that --  18 that this is what all of the signers of this  19 brief agree to, you're saying you disagree  20 with that?</p> <p>21 A. That is correct.</p> <p>22 (Wood 5, online news</p>	251
<p>1 A. If everybody being apply --  2 applying and being admitted to the academy is  3 meeting standards, right, they're all  4 qualified, then what is the role of race have  5 to play?</p> <p>6 Q. So you think it would be  7 irrelevant?</p> <p>8 A. Irrelevant. I agree.</p> <p>9 Q. And you're not familiar with the  10 specifics of USNA's admission process; is that  11 correct?</p> <p>12 A. I am not familiar with the  13 academy's current admissions process, just as  14 when I applied, all I knew about the  15 admissions process was the forms that I was  16 meant to fill out and the package that needed  17 to be submitted with whatever was required  18 back then, you know, Letters of Recommendation  19 and grade point average. Those sorts of  20 things. So I haven't done any independent  21 research into what the academy's process  22 consists of today.</p>	250	<p>1 article-Mullen reveals lessons that shaped his  2 stance on diversity, marked for  3 identification.)</p> <p>4 Q. Okay. Now we can put that  5 aside. Thank you. Okay. I have this one as  6 Exhibit 5. Okay. This is an article that  7 discusses an interview with Admiral Mike  8 Mullen. Are you familiar with Admiral Mullen?</p> <p>9 A. By reputation, yes.</p> <p>10 Q. Okay. And he was the chairman  11 of the joint chiefs staff and the chief of  12 naval operations. Have you served with  13 Admiral Mullen?</p> <p>14 A. I have not.</p> <p>15 Q. Have you -- have you met Admiral  16 Mullen?</p> <p>17 A. I have not.</p> <p>18 Q. Do you have any reason to doubt  19 the military qualifications of Admiral Mullen?</p> <p>20 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: Object to the  21 form of the question.</p> <p>22 THE WITNESS: I don't doubt his</p>	252

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<p>1 you know, or support the Ukraine or climate 2 change or whatever.</p> <p>3 So the fact that current media is 4 reflecting back on a very rough period of time 5 50 or 60 years ago would indicate that, yes, 6 there is a potential for just kind of a 7 general sense of history and how things 8 weren't so good back when and maybe that 9 shapes or colors your perspective of people 10 today.</p> <p>11 Q. What about the fact that, you 12 know, the, like, the individual, kind of the 13 hypothetical individual you mentioned, the 14 17-year-old African-American, they might have 15 a less -- it's less likely that they may have 16 a parent or -- or, you know, uncle that was 17 served in the military, because of that, do 18 you think the military should have extra 19 efforts to reach out to start that 20 generational tie?</p> <p>21 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: Object to the 22 form of the question.</p>	333	<p>1 and home schooling was occurring. Military 2 recruiters without a student population to 3 engage, it was very hard to try to recruit. 4 And so you saw this dramatic slump in 5 recruiting. When campuses started opening 6 back up post Covid lockdown, there was 7 reluctance in some school systems to give 8 military recruiters access to those campuses. 9 And because student populations change over 10 every year or in a high school grouping, if 11 you're talking about sophomores, juniors and 12 seniors every three years, it's a new -- whole 13 new cohort of people. So the military -- for 14 the military, it's almost like starting from 15 scratch. Instead of being there present all 16 the time year after year, now there's a two or 17 three year absence, and you're having to 18 reengage a very youthful population that has 19 no previous engagement with the military at 20 all. So the services are very aware of this. 21 They're trying to figure out what the solution 22 is. Do they have the recruiting pool?</p>	335
<p>1 THE WITNESS: I think the first 2 part of your statement I agree with 3 completely, and that was why I brought up 4 these statistics, right? Fewer Americans have 5 any kind of touch point with the American 6 military. So the likelihood that any high 7 school student has a family member who serves 8 in the military is decreasing over time, 9 right? I mean, the services are shrinking in 10 size. And so with fewer people in the 11 military, it's less likely that a current high 12 school student has a family member in that 13 military, right? So I agree with you on that. 14 Should the services redouble or make more 15 effort to engage? Absolutely. And all the 16 services know that. They're trying to figure 17 out how to do that. How do they make a 18 presence on social media platforms? There's a 19 big debate, but an effort by the military 20 services to gain or regain entry into high 21 schools, a lot of that was shut down during 22 the Covid years when schools were shut down</p>	334	<p>1 One or two of the services -- I'm 2 trying to remember now who it was. It might 3 have been the Army is trying to, like, 4 professionalize their recruiters within that 5 service, you know, more schools, more formal 6 training, and to make that an occupational 7 specialty, as opposed to taking an Army 8 infantryman and then sending them through 9 recruiting school and then he goes out and 10 does a two or three year as a recruiter, you 11 actually make this an occupational specialty, 12 and that's what that Army soldier does for a 13 good part of his career. So they're aware of 14 it and they're making these efforts. 15 BY MR. CARMICHAEL: 16 Q. Okay. I want to move on to your 17 interviews starting on page 59. Are these 18 three colonels the only individuals you 19 interviewed? 20 MR. STRAWBRIDGE: I think this 21 is going to run into the same problem we had 22 earlier with undisclosed drafts or reports.</p>	336